

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, AREA B,
BUILDING 66, CENTRAL HEATING PLANT
DAYTON VIC.
OHIO

HAER No. OH-79-AH

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, AREA B,
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Location: On north side of 3rd Street between D and E Streets; Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Area B, Dayton Vicinity, Greene County, Ohio.

Date of Construction: 1929.

Present Owner: USAF.

Present Use: Awaiting Demolition.

Significance: The Central Heating Plant provided steam heat for the base's buildings via underground tunnels from 1929 until 1983.

Project History: This report is part of the overall Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Area B documentation conducted by HAER 1991-1993. See overview report, HAER No. OH-79, for a complete description of the project.

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, AREA B,
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HAER No. OH-79-AH
(Page 2)

DESCRIPTION: Building 66 is a three-story, six-course American bond brick building with a high concrete foundation and a flat parapeted roof. Six two-story window panels with factory glass are below a concrete belt course. Three-part, punched-mullion windows are set in the foundation and in the top section above the belt course. A ramp leads down to the basement with double steel doors. The building had a coal yard behind it and is serviced by railroad sidings on the north side.

Major additions to the building were completed in 1935, 1944 and 1958. Many other additions and extensive modifications have taken place through the years. Its distinctive smokestack was removed in 1983.

HISTORY: Building 66 was built in 1929 at a cost of just over \$250,000 to replace the original 1927 heating plant which burned down, and at the time was the largest pulverized coal plant in the Air Corps. The plant operated by grinding raw coal (of the nut and slack type, up to 1½" in diameter) down to the consistency of flour and blowing the coal powder, via induced draft fans, into one of seven boilers where it was burnt in suspension. The resulting heat provided steam for all of Area B via underground tunnels. One interesting feature of the plant was the inclusion of explosion doors on top of the boilers to relieve the pressure in the case of inadvertent ignition. The building was served by a railroad siding, thereby correcting one of the costlier defects of McCook Field by allowing coal to be brought directly to the heating plant. A coal pile was located directly behind the building.

The plant was in continuous use until 1983, when 75 percent of its operations were shut down and some of the larger equipment sold; one of the boilers ended up in Germany and another one went to a sawmill in North Carolina. By 1991 the building had been phased out of service completely and, along with most of its remaining equipment, currently sits in a state of extreme disrepair, awaiting demolition.

For bibliography, see Wright-Patterson Air Force Base overview report (HAER No. OH-79).